621 groupings, whatever their size, settled in a definite spot and occupying a limited area. Referring to observations made in the past, the Fang apparently distinguished definitely two types of these units: the ƶal, "inhabited only by the family of the ésa (chief or patriarch) his kin and his clients [dependents]" and the mfaƍ, "where several families gather together without mingling together . . . ," the different parts being "separated by guardhouses built in the center of the single street. . . ." (2) It is easy to see

2. V. Largeau, op. cit., article: Village.

by this statement that the nd'è bòt (minor lineage) formed the fundamental element, as is seen by sections or quarters definitely marked out. The numerous concentrations were most often conditioned by reasons of security (they were mostly found on the frontiers [129] of the Fang country at the period of conquest) or by the power of aggregation of a strong personality. (1) They repre-

1. Maignan in his Études sur le Pays Pahouin [Studies of the Pahouin Country], op. cit., refers to such a power held by "him who, by his age, his experience, his eloquence, his wealth . . . is the most capable of protecting the interests of all."

sented more or less extended lineages. L. Martrou points out that all the members of these villages "go back through four or five ancestors to a common paternal founder." (2)

2. Father L. Martrou, "Le nomadisme des Fangs [Nomadism of the Fangs]," Revue de Géographie, Vol. 3, 1909.

621 Early works and documents show the village grouping to be an
● 166 eminently mobile unit. Father Trilles gives the example of a village

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166 that accomplished a migration of 500 kilometers with the same chief (1910), and Dr. Aujoulat mentions a grouping which in twenty years moved over 200 kilometers (1935). These are characteristics of a seminomadic people and not of a peasant people. For a long time the government ran up against what it called the "migratory mania" of the Fang. The law in Gabon manifests a lack of attachment to cultivated land which underlines this instability. L. Martrou points out that there is no definite appropriation of the places for cultivation, hunting, or fishing; there exist only "zones of influence" with uncertain boundaries. (3)

3. Father L. Martrou, "Le nomadisme des Fangs [Nomadism of the Fangs]," op. cit.

166 The geographer, J. Bruhnes, basing his judgment on these facts, made of the Fang a type of Naturvoelker [nature folk] and claimed that "the most general causes of the migrations... resulted from destructive occupation." (4) It is essential to correct

4. J. Bruhnes, La Geographie Humaine [Human Geography], abridged edition, Paris, 1942, pp. 199-204.

here an opinion based on insufficient information, which will lead us to observations valuable for our analysis. At various times we have specifically stated that there exist some Fang centers settled a long time ago in a limited region (in Woleu-N'tem). (5) We

5. Confirmed by Captain Maignan, op. cit., who draws attention to villages "occupying the same land for more than a century," (study dated 1912).

have shown how echeloning took place, starting from regular "migratory centers," and have indicated the manner in which the

● 166 social organization favored (or gave rise to) the breaking up of groupings. These facts lead to the idea of relative instability and to the recognition of internal causes responsible for this instability.

Moreover, recent geographic studies assert that the "system of agriculture adopted by the Fang (could not by) the destruction of the forest, [130] (determine) the displacement of a whole population." These studies recall the existence of a "true and early settlement" in the heart of the Fang country in the South Cameroons.(1) This is certified by the existence of landed property

1. G. Sautter, "Les paysans noirs du Gabon septentrional" [The Black Peasants of Northern Gabon], op. cit., pp. 126-128, 158.

among the Cameroons Pahoun. (2) The migrations through Gabon

2. Cf. M. Bertaut, op. cit., chapter: Les Biens [Property].

must be the most recent (representing no doubt the point of departure of a new phase of expansionism), and the Ogooué represents the frontier of the Fang country (actually the advanced front of this people) only because of French occupation. The Fang have only recently given up a policy of conquest at which they excelled because of their fighting valor and their assimilating capacity. Until the eve of 1914 the administration ran up against warlike organizations, the Bizima, operating in the neighborhood of the Okamo River, and a report of 1922 specifically states that "the native is not easily handled." There is no doubt that for a long time the Fang have made every effort to secure and control the trade routes and trading centers early established in this part of central Africa. This is confirmed by legends which connect a trek toward the west with the discovery of great riches. (3) As

3. Cf. Legends quoted by L. Mba, op. cit., and V. Largeau, op. cit.

166 early as the middle of the last century the explorer Du Chaillu noted how this warlike pressure was completed by peaceful conquest by means of "alliances" created by marriage with foreighers. (4) Dr. Cureau, fifty years later, pointed out that the

> 4. Father Du Chaillu, op. cit., "... for their part the Fang, far away from the European commerce much coveted by them, are happy to acquire a son-in-law nearer the coast. So I suspect that in a few years they will succeed in contracting marriages with other tribes on a very large scale."

control of the Ogooué trade had passed into the hands of the Fang peoples. (5) With settlement in Gabon, the economy of the Fang

> 5. Dr. A. Cureau, op. cit., p. 294.

groupings takes on a double orientation: it comes in contact with the forest peoples who are essentially hunters and collectors of trading produce, and it transforms its movement of expansion into an attempt to seize the trade of Lower Gabon. One might say that French colonization has prevented a sort of Fang colonization in this region. While this double task of conquest and trade depends on the men, the economy of subsistence is to all intents and purposes left to the women. On this basis [131] the division of labor is established, leaving to the men alone the means of acquiring wealth and capital.

166 621 361 Such elements help us to understand the relative mobility of the groupings. A people that has no concern for agriculture would have no strong attachment for land that is equally fertile in any part of the forest. (1) In another respect the characteristic of a

> 1. See what was still said in 1934 by the administrator Le Testu (one of the best observers of the men and the country): "Lacking any taste for working the

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land, which the Pahouin will never acquire, for he considers it humiliating, he will perhaps develop a taste for the profit resulting from this work."

conquering society has imposed on the old Fang village an appearance which has often been mentioned: two uninterrupted rows (nkara) of huts surrounding a kind of courtyard closed at each end [712] by a "guardhouse" (abɛ̃nɔ̃); sometimes a palisade of posts enclosing a banana plantation serves as a protection in the rear. Inside the huts there is only a limited amount of things which are easily [352] transportable: "goods" of value are stored in chests, the ancestors' altars (biɛ́ri) are kept in large cylindrical boxes. (2) There is no

2. Very similar to the "baskets of ancestors" carried by the Ba-kongo during their great migrations.

doubt that the grouping lived for a long time in a state of insecurity. This was primarily the factor which intervened to maintain a minimum size without which there was no real security. The causes contributing to the breaking up of groups, the organization of Fang society itself, the search for women and goods, and, finally, the agricultural methods, were dominated and largely impeded by this necessity. It appears certain that really large villages existed at the beginning of French occupation. V. Largeau refers to mfaŋ with eight or ten "guardhouses"; F. Grébert speaks of ten to twenty of these "guardhouses," (3) and F. Meyé asserts

3. F. Grébert. Au Gabon [In the Gabon], Paris, 1932.

that "the normal population of a village was from 80 to 170 warriors, exclusive of women and adolescents." (4) According to estimates

4. Quoted by G. Sautter, op. cit., p. 124.

166 made fifty years ago, such a whole represented from 350 to 700
621 or 800 persons — while present-day villages rarely average more
361 than 100 inhabitants. With peace restored, the grouping has relaxed and divided into its constituent elements which have broken away to form neighboring hamlets. A special word, ngòra, is the name given to these hamlets which are considered as still forming the same whole.

621 Linked with the virile character of Fang society is certainly
562 [132] the accent on the separation of sexes as shown in daily
571 life. For the woman, the living place is the hut; for the man it
344 is essentially the "guardhouse." M. H. Kingsley writes: "The men spend most of their time in palaver houses built at each end of the street, while the women bring bowls of food the whole day
[784] long," (3) without being able to enter the abèñõ, which is absolutely

3. Travels in West Africa, p. 154.

forbidden them. H. Trilles defines this abèñõ as the place "where the men assemble to deal with community affairs, war, marriage,
[574] lawsuits, etc...," and where strangers are welcomed. In addition it is the place where the young men receive a large part of their education, where they learn, according to L. Mba, the most im-
621 portant interdicts (ɛ́ki). Males of the same nd'è bòt assemble in
562 the abèñõ, which forms a virile grouping and one of kinship. In
571 its midst the authority of the "eldest" is expressed. He is both the symbol and the regulator of the life of the group, and the intermediary between it and the ancestors. Here not only are important transactions regulated, but work is also organized. The life of each one is subject to the control and the nearly constant censure of all. In it is created a cohesion so that this group is the most resistant element of Fang society. It is through the medium of this group, that the traditional Fang is assessed, is isolated as an individual, by the foreigner; he is not known in the first place as X but as a man attached to the abèñõ of Y. Such a grouping therefore represents a strong "community": the fusion, which favors effective kinship to the maximum (it is based on immediate filiation and "fraternity"), worship of the same ancestors, and joint

of land by "elder sons" (mintôl) have certainly had an unfavorable demographic effect by upsetting the family structure—41 percent of adult males were unmarried in the Oyem subdivision in 1948. Finally, the wide-scale introduction of trade alcohol before 1914 and since 1946 has most certainly made things worse.

However, the magnitude of the crisis, which has primarily affected the Fang of Gabon, must not be exaggerated. The general demographic development might be summed up as follows:

Temporary increase in general mortality immediately after pacification, owing to greater spread of epidemics, particularly of smallpox and sleeping sickness, as a result of new means of mobility; possible rise of sterility rates with slight fall in the genital capacity /13/ owing to venereal infection, alcoholism, labor recruitment (above all in Gabon), and changes in family and village economic organization.

On the other hand, rapid and continuous fall in general mortality resulting from pacification; since about 1930 a falling-off of epidemics and general improvement in hygiene initiated; at present a decline in infant mortality. The universal application of wide-scale antimalarial prophylaxis (in the Cameroons) already allows us to anticipate a spectacular increase in the population.

Viewed as a whole, the balance between favorable and unfavorable factors appears to be on the positive side, in any case in areas not affected by the great Gabon famine of 1924. Moreover, awareness of demographic malaise must have partly resulted from the halting of migration, which made a sort of inventory possible. This awareness is especially perceptible in Gabon, where the situation seems to have been in fact more serious.

5. History and Traditions of Origin

The known history of the Pahouin group is that of a migration toward the sea, a migration in process of completion before our eyes.

Whence did it start? This is a very controversial question. Stoll, following Schweinfurth, speaks of Upper Egypt, as does Trilles, basing this opinion on linguistic and cultural arguments such as the use of the military crossbow and the shape of the saber (fa). It is this same shape that leads Tessmann to speak of Roman influence. Marche and

6:Alexandre and Binet--47 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

but most of the artisans live in towns; there it is that they learned their trades, more easily find materials and tools, there also they believe the multitude will enable them to collect a large number of orders.

Certain crafts are long established, such as tailoring, masonry, and carpentry. But while Pahouin are numerous in the woodworking and building trades, as tailors they frequently have to compete with immigrants. New professions arise, often controlled by foreigners also—photographers, mattress makers, and mechanics. This brief list of the most widespread trades allows one to infer the rise in the standard of living: doors and windows, tables, chairs, wardrobes, beds, mattresses are now in quite general use.

The towns play an essential role and are completely integrated into the country, since it is there that the rural people go to have the things made which they need. The mixed character of town populations is astonishing. Immigrants from all regions of the Cameroons or French Equatorial Africa give them a cosmopolitan character, while the bush has not sustained such a complex intermixture.

Nevertheless, we must not exaggerate the antithesis between country people and townsfolk: many countrymen have resided a few years in town and have kept up connections there. Migration away from centers was quite active thirty years ago, and certain Pahouin tribes were largely represented in the timber industry. There has been just as decided a movement toward the towns: "The development of cacao plantations along the Woleu-N'Tem by changing the living conditions of the villagers certainly seems to have been the principal cause of the halt in emigration in 1930." This remark by Sautter about the Fang is also true of the Boulou and —to a lesser degree, perhaps—of the Béti and assimilated tribes more closely pressed together in their habitat.

Béti, Boulou, or Fang form a petty bourgeoisie rather than a proletariat without resources. The following figures show the relatively small proportion of unskilled laborers (1):

1. M. Soret, Démographie et problèmes urbains en A.E.F. /Demography and Urban Problems in French Equatorial Africa/, I.F.A.N. /Institut Français d'Afrique Noir/, 1954.

Occupational Distribution of Pahouin Emigrants in Douala

	Laborers	Artisans	Intellectual Occupations	Traders and Licensed Dealers
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Beti	37	55	1.9	6
Boulou		60	40	

A study of Dolisie, Baronga, and Poto-Poto makes it possible to establish similar facts for occupations (2). /39/

2. According to J. Guilbot, Petite étude sur la main-d'oeuvre à Douala /A Brief Study of Manpower at Douala/, I.F.A.N. /Institut Français d'Afrique Noir/, the Cameroons, 1947.

The proportion among them of persons who have education is about 40 percent and, what is even more important, that of the well-educated is relatively high.

Poto-Poto: Cultural Level of "Coastal Forest Dwellers"

Illiterates	Educated	Holders of the C.E.P.*	Holders of the "Brevet"
610	390	111	56

/*Certificat d'etudes primaires, certificate of primary education./

After spending some time in town, some emigrants return to their native villages, thus diminishing the separation between the two places. The bush folk, in turn, often come to the urban centers (1) and in

1. A set of figures gives the exact number of these trips: in 480 budgets relative to a total of 2,000 persons, 1,116 trips were listed (J. Binet, op. cit., p. 112).

such a case we gather that each principal town of a subdivision is a genuine center of attraction. Although new these towns are not artificial. There is another piece of evidence for this, the social-occupational distribution of the urban population is almost constant from one town to another, a proof that it corresponds to needs that are also constant.

Out of 100 inhabitants one generally finds: laborers 16.5, employees 12, traders 8.3, chauffeurs 6.9 (and "motor boys" 4.3), public service employees 6.7, domestic servants 5.8, carpenters 4.9, masons 4, farmers 3.5, tailors 3.2, mechanics 2.9, photographers 0.8, herders 0.5, catechists 0.1, without occupation 9, etc.

This in general outline is the present-day distribution. Let it simply be kept in mind that, with the diffusion of a new culture, the whole society becomes modified. The techniques and tools in use have been increased and diversified at the same time as social conditions.

Chapter 5

Social Organization

1. Forms of Settlement, Habitat

The basic social group is the patriarchal family (nda bot = lit., house of the people), to which corresponds the hamlet or elementary village, the jal (Boulou, pl. mal; Fang, Ewondo, dzal), generally called by the name of the patriarch (ésa = father; nnôl = eldest, senior), but sometimes, when isolated, carrying a special toponym (éyôlé = proper name, designation; a person's name is rather jôé; Fang, édzoé). These mal are usually arranged into multifamily, sometimes multi-clan, villages, miniam (sing. nlam), the latter term designating both the group of dwellings and the soil appertaining to them. The nlam always has a place name of its own, which may refer to its geographical situation: nkôlayôp = on the hill; to a topographical or botanical peculiarity: ako'abete = dressed stone, ajap = the name of a tree, ma'an = crossroads; or to an incident connected with the founding: ébolewo'o (Ebolowa) = decayed chimpanzee, because the village was

103 set up at a spot where the body of a chimpanzee had been found; menjikôm = from mẹ nji kômbo, I did not want to, the founding family not having wanted to go any further. /Or the nlam may take its place name/ from a nickname or whimsical name: mañ = sea, the site being considered "as beautiful as the sea"; kamelôn = Kamerun, "because a white man told us that the country would be called thus henceforward; évuzok = elephant's stomach, because of the appetite of its inhabitants, etc. It may also happen that a village name repeats that of its founder's native village, sometimes coupled with an indication like baa = second, mfefé = new, or with the name of its founder or chief, Méyo me Nkulu, the Méyo of Nkulu.

166 621 178 The leapfrog advance of small Pahouin groups at the time of the invasion has already been described. Each of these groups generally corresponded to a hamlet—jal—or to a village—nlam—or, rather, to the corresponding family units, nda bôt or mvôk. The migrating group retained rights to the abandoned site (bilik). Today the migration of whole villages is much less common. Rather, we are witnessing either a "swarming off" of villages that are overpopulated in relation to the amount of land available for plantations (in particular land near a vehicular road, especially in Cameroons), or a kind of explosion or social disintegration, /41/ the latter phenomenon being particularly noticeable among the Fang, where it has been well described by Balandier. Administrative action has often been a prime mover in the latest migrations: in Gabon, for instance, there has been an attempt to move whole villages for administrative, economic, or hygienic reasons, but in doing so collective groups have been broken up that had already been weakened by the disappearance of ancient defense needs and by the economic changes resulting from colonization. The new villages, often reconstituted without taking into account previous clan or family structures, no longer had any cohesion and split up into small rootless hamlets, poorly populated, continually moving their sites in disorderly fashion and usually seeking to escape contact with the administration. Since 1946, especially at the instance of the deputy, Aubame, himself a Fang, there has come into existence in Gabon a movement to regroup villages by clans, the results of which do not seem to have corresponded to the hopes of its promoters.

166 621 The situation is perceptibly different in the Cameroons, where the early introduction of the cultivation of cacao (before 1914 in Ewôndo

country and in the north of Boulou country) has put a considerable brake upon village nomadism, the planters not liking to move away from their plantations. When there is migration, the activity consists rather in the "swarming off" of a portion of the inhabitants, who go to found a new hamlet in a site favorable for cultivation, without there being from then on any necessary correspondence between family structure and settlement pattern. The new jal will no longer necessarily correspond to one family but may gather together several families from different and unrelated lineages (mvam).

The Pahouin village of former times was planned for defense. Situated in an oblong clearing, usually within reach of the nearest village (3 to 4 kilometers) by drum-telephone (nkul), it comprised two lines of contiguous rectangular huts, gable to gable, on either side of a courtyard or main street (nseñ), blocked at either end by a guardhouse /men's house/ (aba, abeñ) allowing only a narrow entrance, often oblique, which was barricaded every evening. All doors gave onto the nseñ; the outer walls having merely a few loopholes. Sometimes the village was encircled by a moat (ésalak) and traps, sometimes also by a stockade /akak). The most important subsistence plots (mefup) were in the forest, often quite far away, but near the village behind the huts were banana groves and kitchen gardens, while medicinal plants (bilok bi mebiañ) as well as tobacco were grown in the central nseñ. The hut walls were made of bark (particularly of certain kinds of Ficus /fig/) which was wetted, then beaten flat and dried to form boards; these are the "carbotes" (from the English word "cardboard") still in use on the coast. These boards were fastened by lianas and pegs to posts set in a rectangle. The double pitched roof was of "tiles" made of raffia folioles (obaé, pl. abaé) folded in two and pinned with wooden splinters to the scantlings made of /42/ strips of the main leaf rib set parallel to the ridgepole. This ridgepole rested on forked posts, of which the two central ones had magical significance and were usually carved or at least painted. The dimensions of these dwelling huts rarely exceeded 6 by 3 meters, while those of the guardhouses (meba) might reach twice this. In each household the man had his private hut where he kept his most valuable possessions (biom): chests containing loincloths, etc., weapons, drums, "medicaments" (mebiañ), his own seat, masks, and magical equipment. The women's huts, side by side with his and where the young children slept, were used as kitchens and contained carrying

level that the agencies of authority, of social control, are most in evidence.

The head of the family is the senior, ntôl or ntôle môt, of the adult and active men, benya bôtô, "the true men." He is not necessarily the oldest in age, because infirm old men suffer a genuine capitis diminutio /a loss of status/. The founder of the hamlet or his eldest son can still, even if infirm, preserve a certain moral authority as father, ésa, of the family, but actual authority will then be delegated to a nya môtô chosen from his brothers, sons, or nephews, the éfo'olo (Bertaut). In principle, a jal is composed of the founder, his old relatives /parents/, his younger brothers, his children and those of his sisters, his unmarried sisters, their illegitimate children and those of his daughters. Wives do not belong to the jal; their village is referred to as jañ. Of a divorced woman one would say, a keya jañ, "she has gone back to her village." The size of the nda bôt depends upon different factors: security, the /family/ head's authority, the fertility of the soil, etc. I have already pointed out how several mal can be gathered into a nlam, a proper village. Nowadays the menda me bôt are tending to decrease numerically and no longer to correspond to the jal, which can from now on combine several /menda me bôt/. The limited or household family is becoming more and more important, while the government-sponsored institution of village chiefship /chefferie/, although it is often only an imperfect substitute for the authority of the ntôl or the ésa, undermines that none the less. The size of an average nda bôt may be calculated at twenty /49/ persons (including the wives who do not belong to the jal), less in the towns and among the less prosperous people, more among large planters and the influential (minkukum).

The nda bôt used to be a religious, military, and economic unit. On the religious plane, the father, ésa, was the custodian of the biéti (Fang, biéri), the portable altar or ark of the ancestral cult containing the skulls of the ancestors; he made the decisions about initiations and bore their expense. The initiations have died out, and the missions have burned dozens, if not hundreds, of biéri. Security and colonial order have removed any interest in the ésa's military function. Only his economic role survives to some extent. He used to be the sole owner of the family goods (biôm), sole treasurer of income, and sole regulator of expenditures, of which the most important was the payment of "bride prices" (minsuba) for his younger brothers and his

sons. When cacao was introduced, cultivation was done collectively by the nda bôt, with the ésa selling the produce and taking charge of the money. The younger generation quickly tired of this state of affairs and left their families in order to have plantations of their own. In addition, the inflation of land values from the growing of export crops led to division upon the death of the ésa and brought on the splintering of the nda bôt. This had never been very stable, even before the colonial period, but the cessation of military needs made possible a precocious "swarming off," which had not occurred before except when a new nda bôt was large enough to provide for its own defense.

In spite of this disintegration, jal and nda bôt remain the basic units of Pahouin life, more so than the ayoñ. Development of private property notwithstanding, there does exist a juridical community with collective responsibility and obligatory self-help among its members. Many young people denounce this (cf. Eza Boto, Ville cruelle /Cruel City/, no. 182) and partly leave the jal in order to escape. But that is futile because the ties spread throughout the country become closer at a distance /from the jal/ and because the solidarity of the extended family is probably even stronger among emigrants than among stay-at-homes.

d. The Limited or Household Family; Kinship

The limited or household family, composed of an economically independent man, his wife, his children, sometimes old relatives /parents/, unmarried brothers and sisters, is becoming more and more important, both within the nda bôt framework and outside it. The missions have contributed a good deal to this, especially at the outset of evangelical activity, in order to separate the catechumens from their still animistic mintô mi bôt (they incline to react in the opposite direction nowadays to fight against "destructive individualism"). But economic changes have also played an important part. The household family is the unit of the migrant petty official, of the small-scale planter. There is no word for it; people say either mone nda bôt, "little extended family," or simply nda, "house."

Purely for convenience I shall discuss kinship on this level, in terms of an adult married man. /50/

423 2. Sautter, Bulletin d'Études centrafricaines, 1950 (no. 102).

[16] Migrations and conquests still belong to the recent past. Besides, /74/ the movement of peoples was effected without organization or authority: different clans, tribes, and peoples overlap, family by family, so that it is not possible to determine the territorial base of a collective group.

Among the Ewôndo and Eton the situation is slightly different: the clans, probably better organized, preserved a certain amount of cohesion and carried out their conquest without becoming scattered. Therefore we find that they have boundaries between villages and collective rights over land. "Once plots of land have been cleared, they are not abandoned for good. A village looks upon them as a [241] reserve." In fact population density very much limits shifting cultivation.

[178] In the past forty years customs have changed a great deal and, among these peoples where land tenure was embryonic or nonexistent, ideas are arising that approximate Western rights of ownership.

[16] Population is now pretty nearly stable. It would be quite logical for rights over crops within a fixed boundary to arise, and in this direction some development is making itself felt. In certain areas 423 anyone may still cut wood, lianas, gather wild fruits, or hunt, to 241 satisfy his personal needs, but if he makes a profit from the sale of these things, he must obtain the consent of the family /occupying/ the area in which he carries on this activity. Elsewhere, the use of certain produce even for private requirements is subject to permission or to sharing the harvest. Thus the customary principle of the free use of natural goods is being restricted, at least in certain particular cases. With increase in population comes the idea of a virtual right over uncultivated forest lands. Families consider that they alone have the right to clear the land on which they depend. Men with experience state clearly that "formerly everyone cleared forest land without asking anyone's permission. Now that the country is becoming populous, permission must be asked." In less populated cantons clearing in the great forest goes on without restriction.

In conformity with ancestral customs, the harvest belongs to the cultivators: a right over personal property rather than a right over land. Nevertheless, a tendency toward a right of land ownership is

VI. The Establishment of a New Village

361 621 166 787 Various circumstances may lead to the setting-up of a new village. Worked-out land, denuded hunting anf fishing grounds, decaying huts, a disease decimating the children, the chief's death, a defeat in war, sometimes merely the wish to push on, are the principal reasons.

The spirits are consulted before departure is considered. [Footnote omitted.] There is a triple sacrifice; to the spiritual guardians of the village, to the ancestors, and to the totem. If the three replies are favorable, plans may go ahead. Otherwise, a sacrifice producing an ill-omened interpretation will be undertaken again, after a few days, until a favorable result is obtained.

361 621 After this first test a suitable location is sought. As this choice is made by delegates, the practitioner is called upon and he, with all the male inhabitants, combs the [557] surroundings of the new village, singing and dancing so as to drive away malignant spirits or any that might be injurious to the new establishment.

361 621 769 782 All the men then come together in the middle of what will be the future village, and the chief picks out the spot where he will build his own hut. A sacrifice is offered there, first to the totem and then to the spirits of the ancestors. To do this a roof of leaves is hastily erected and roughly placed on a few stakes. The évora biéri is carried underneath the roof and the chief puts in front of the unopened box a black hen and a kid.

Before slaughtering the two victims, the chief removes the akaméyôn from his baldrick and blows three times in the oviara, turning in three different directions. The objective of this ceremony is to dispel evil spirits. He then drags the akaméyôn behind him over the entire site of the new village. After one round he does another, holding the akaméyôn in his hand. Thus malignant spirits of earth and air will be dispersed. The akaméyon is then put on the évora biéri. The chief slaughters the hen by cutting off its head, grasps it by the feet, and sprinkles the akaméyôn and box. He again traverses the village, sprinkling